

Remarks/Argument

In the Office Action dated August 31, 2007, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of KAO et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,086,676).

Claim Summary

By this Amendment, claims 1 and 4-6 have been revised, as discussed below, and claims 12-16 have been submitted for the Examiner's consideration. Further, claims 2 and 3 have been canceled, without prejudice and without disclaimer of the subject matter, and the subject matter of claims 2 and 3 has been substantially incorporated into claim 1. Claims 7-11 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner.

Claims 1, 4-6 and 12-16 are pending in the application. Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Specification

By this Amendment, paragraph [0008], beginning on page 3 of the specification, has been amended to correct informalities identified by the Examiner. In particular, the UV source portion "62" has been replaced with ---22--- to be consistent with Figure 1. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment to the specification.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections - Claims 1 and 4-6

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of KAO et al. No proper combination of Applicants' admitted prior art and KAO et al. teaches or suggests each and every element of the claimed subject matter, as discussed below.

Independent Claim 1

Amended claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, “a prober for generating the UV source open/close signal and the coating condition designation signal, and for controlling the pad coating operation, the prober comprising an interrupt signal generating circuit for generating at least one interrupt signal in response to the first signals and the second signals, and a controller for stopping the pad coating operation in response to the at least one interrupt signal.” No proper combination of Applicants’ admitted prior art and KAO et al. teaches or suggests at least these features.

In the Office Action, the Examiner acknowledged that the Applicants’ admitted prior art does not disclose “first signals indicative of respective operative states of the first control switches” or “second signals indicative of respective operative states of the second control switches” of a UV source portion and a dispenser, respectively. *See* Official Action, p. 4. Further, the Examiner does not identify a particular reference to teach or suggest these claimed features, but rather states that the admitted prior art “discloses that errors due to improperly set switches are known.” *Id.* However, the fact that errors may be known to occur in the prior art system does not teach or suggest outputting signals (i.e., provided to an interrupt signal generating circuit) in response to such errors.

Also, the Examiner asserted that the KAO et al. patent “discloses an interrupt signal generating circuit (see Figures 4A-4D) which generates an interrupt signal in response to the first and second signals” *See* Official Action, p. 4. However, the KAO et al. patent is directed to a programmable interlock for a vacuum processing system, not a pad coating system, as recited in claim 1. *See, e.g.*, col. 4, lines 32-55. Therefore, KAO et al. do not disclose a “generic interlock system and signals” as asserted by the Examiner. *See* Official Action, p. 4. Rather, KAO et al. disclose interlock signals specifically directed to controlling various parts of a vacuum processing system, such as a

chamber lid, an impedance matching box, a one-half atmosphere indicator, an over-temperature indicator, a water pump failure sensor, and the like. *See, e.g.* Col. 5, lines 24-30.

Moreover, it would not have been obvious to combine the vacuum system of KAO et al. with the pad coating system of the present application. The Examiner generally asserted that interlock switches are well known in microelectronics manufacturing (Official Action, p. 4), but the only evidence provided by the Examiner was interlock signaling for a different type of system. Accordingly, it appears that the only suggestion for combining Applicants' admitted prior art with KAO et al. is improper hindsight reasoning.

Because no proper combination of Applicants' admitted prior art and KAO et al. teach or suggest each and every claim recitation, the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should be withdrawn.

Dependent Claims 4-6

Claims 4-6 depend from claim 1 and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons discussed above and in view of additional recitations of novelty. For example, claims 5 and 6 specifically recite the switches for which the operating states are respectively indicated by the first and second signals. Neither Applicants' admitted prior art nor KAO et al., either alone or in any proper combination, teach or suggest stopping a pad coating operation in response to signals indicating the states of these particular types of switches.

New Claims 12-16

New independent claim 12 is allowable for substantially the same reasons stated above with respect to claim 1. Claims 13-16 depend from claim 12 and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons discussed above and in view of additional recitations of novelty.

Conclusion

No other issues remaining, reconsideration and favorable action upon the claims 1, 4-6 and 12-16 now pending in the application are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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September 20, 2007

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